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SUBJECT: HONDURAS' VISION OF THE COUNTRY 2038

Classified By: Ambassador Hugo Llorens for reasons 1.4 b and d.

11. (C) Summary: Before his election, President Porfirio "Pepe" Lobo circulated a long-term plan called Vision of the Country 2038 and National Plan 2022. It was submitted to and passed by the outgoing Congress and signed into law by President Lobo during his inauguration. The document includes a draft law creating a super ministry, the Technical Secretariat of Planning and International Cooperation, which will manage all planning processes. The Vision establishes 22 goals of where Honduras should be in the year 2038 whereas the National Plan focuses on the strategic guidelines for eleven planning areas that will be the heart of the planning process. The implementation of specific policies to achieve the goals of the Vision and National Plan are not discussed in the document and little insight as to the future policies of the Lobo administration can be discerned from the document. The current situation confronting Honduras makes it difficult to predict events in the coming weeks let alone 28 years into the future and the document does not discuss how it will afford all these programs. The international community, which was not party to the process of creating this document, may have reservations about being asked to fund its implementation. Nevertheless, the document may provide strategic parameters prepared by the Hondurans themselves that may be helpful to donor agencies that seek to reengage in the future. End Summary.

12. (U) Before his election, President Lobo circulated a long-term plan called Vision of the Country 2038 and National Plan 2022. The Vision is a 28 year picture of where the country should be as defined by a wide range of tangible indicators. The 28-year Vision is composed of two 12-year National Plans and a four year transition to a new Vision. Each 12-year National Plan will be made up of three 4-year Government Plans which are timed to coincide with the cycle of presidential elections and which will outline how each administration will try and achieve the goals of the Vision and National Plan. The document also includes a draft law creating a super ministry, the Technical Secretariat of Planning and International Cooperation, which will manage all the planning processes. The original formulation of the document began during the administration of Jose Manuel Zelaya and continued during the de facto regime. (Note: One of the principal authors is thought to be Zelaya's Minister of Governance Victor Meza. End Note.) The final document is thought to have been a cut and paste of several other planning documents created over the past few years.

The Vision of the Country - 2038

13. (U) The Vision establishes 22 goals of where Honduras should be in the year 2038 covering the concepts of: an educated and healthy Honduras without extreme poverty, a Honduras that is developing democracy in security and without violence, a productive Honduras that generates dignified employment while taking advantage of natural resources in a sustainable manner and reducing environmental vulnerability, and envisioning a modern state that is transparent, responsible, efficient and competitive. The Vision also delineates the principles on which the planning process will be based.

The National Plan - 2022

14. (U) The National Plan focuses on the strategic guidelines for eleven planning areas that will be the heart of the planning process. The eleven planning areas are: 1) sustainable development of the population, 2) democracy, citizenship and governance, 3) reduction of poverty, 4) education and culture, 5) health 6) security, 7) regional development, natural resources and the environment, 8) infrastructure, 9) macroeconomic stability, 10) competitiveness, national image and development, and 11) mitigation of climate change. An annex to the document includes 58 tangible indicators mostly developed by various international organizations (such as the Rate of Demographic Dependence) to track progress in achieving goals. These indicators show the current base rate and the hoped for progress for each measurement during the next three plans of government (2013, 2017, and 2022) and at the end of the vision period (2038).

15. (U) Each planning area of the National Plan has its own chapter in the document outlining the background behind the current situation, the biggest challenges faced by planners and the goals to be achieved during the period of the plan. These chapters appear to have been drafted by different authors as they vary in length, style and content. The chapter on natural resources and the environment goes into great detail on the legal basis for environmental agreements (international treaties and the Honduran Constitution), description of the various river basins in Honduras, etc. for 12 pages before getting to the biggest challenges while the chapter on security has only three paragraphs of background. Some chapters contradict others.

16. (U) Very few specific policies to achieve the goals contained in the National Plan are discussed and little insight as to the future policies of the Lobo administration can be discerned from the document. The language of the document is often vague and oddly structured such that a wide range of interpretations could be made. Apparently, the specific policies and implementation tools will be part of the Government Plans to be prepared by each administration.

Plan to be Incorporated into Law

17. (U) The vision document includes a draft of a new law (Law for the Establishment of a Country Vision and the Adoption of a National Plan for Honduras). The law would include the basics of the Vision and Plan including the 2038 goals to be achieved and charge the Presidency of the Republic with responsibility for strategic planning. The Presidency would be supported by the National Plan Council, the National Council of Competition and Innovation, the Sectoral Cabinets and the Councils of Regional development. These councils will be made up of a wide range of government ministers, heads of private organizations, union leaders, academics and other representatives of Civil Society.

18. (U) The law also includes a total reorganization of the government planning process and the creation of a new Planning Ministry (Technical Secretariat for Planning and

International Cooperation) which will replace the Technical Secretariat for International Cooperation (SETCO) and other diverse planning functions in government. There will also be a Technical Sub-secretariat of Development Planning that will take over planning responsibilities from UNAT and other departments. Although included in the Economic Cabinet, the Finance Ministry appears to play a minor role in the planning function.

¶9. (U) The Councils of Regional Development will be structured among the various river basins of the country and not along political lines, crossing the boundaries of some departments and municipalities. These councils are designed to bring a wide range of citizens and local groups into the planning process but how these development planning regions will interact with local and departmental governments is unclear.

¶10. (U) The Vision document was presented on January 11 to the outgoing National Congress, which approved the bill at its last session on January 13. President Lobo signed the new legislation at his inauguration on January 27.

Implementation

¶11. (U) The implementation of specific policies to achieve the goals of the Vision and National Plan are not discussed in the document. Other than the very detailed creation of the new Technical Secretariat, the document is very vague and sometimes contradictory about implementation. There are rumors that the document is a cut and paste of several other documents which could account for these inconsistencies. Implementation will apparently be left to the various government plans. The Government Plan of the Lobo administration (the first of seven under this 28-year Vision) has not yet been presented.

Comment

¶12. (C) The document is bold in scope but its lack of specifics and the amount of time it covers raise questions about its utility. It is a long range plan to eliminate persistent poverty (and the health and security problems derived from poverty) that has afflicted Honduras despite decades of foreign assistance. It counts on a wide range of citizen participation touching all sectors of society and forms an integral part of President Lobo's plans to unify the country and create a government of national unity.

¶13. (C) At the same time, the current situation confronting Honduras - a result of economic mismanagement, the coup d'etat and the international financial crisis - make it difficult to predict events in the coming weeks let alone 28 years into the future. The document does not discuss how programs it recommends will be funded. The international community, which was not party to the process of creating this document, may have reservations about being asked to fund its implementation. Nevertheless, the document may provide strategic parameters prepared by the Hondurans themselves that may be helpful to donor agencies that seek to reengage in the future.

LLORENS